



Department of Public Works
Milwaukee Water Works

Jeffrey J. Mantes
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Director of Operations

Carrie M. Lewis
Superintendent of Water Works

For Immediate Release: June 16, 2006

For Additional Information Contact: Cecilia Gilbert, Permits & Communications Manager,
286-3261 or 708-2295

Milwaukee Water Works Urges Residents Not to Open Fire Hydrants

With summer temperatures reaching the high 80's with high humidity, the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Water Works today warned residents that opening fire hydrants for water to play in is dangerous and illegal.

The illegal opening of fire hydrants causes water pressure to drop, making it difficult to put out a fire. When untrained persons with the wrong tools open hydrants, the hydrants do not function properly and must be repaired. Hydrants should only be opened by Fire Department or Water Works personnel or with permission. There are about 20,000 hydrants in the city.

Over the three-day Memorial Day weekend 37 fire hydrants were illegally opened and to date, 40 have been opened since May. In June 2005, there were 249 illegal openings.

Play with Water and you Could Get Burned

Fire Hydrants are for fires, not for fun

It's Dangerous

- Breaking open a hydrant makes it unusable to put out a fire
- Lowers water pressure and hampers firefighting
- Strong spray hazardous to children and motorists may not see them in the spray
- Spray obstructs the view of motorists and can cause accidents

It's a Crime

- \$1,000 fine or 30 days in jail for tampering with a hydrant

Costly to all Water Users

- Hydrant open one hour = cost to city \$227
- Hydrant open four hours = cost to city \$883
- Damaged hydrant = \$850
- Broken hydrant = \$3500
- Loss of a precious resource, water
- Buildings are flooded = property damage

Report Tampering and Illegal Opening

- **414-286-3710**

Alternatives:

- Cool off at a county park, pool, or Lake Michigan
- Wading pools are available at seven locations:
Burnham and Burbanks Parks, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday
Enderis Park, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday - Friday plus Saturday and Sunday, noon to 3 p.m.
MPS playgrounds at Holt, Merrill, Modrejewski, and Ohio, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday.
For more information, see <http://www.milwaukeeerecreation.net/activity-guide/SummerGuide2006.pdf>
- Visit a Cool Spot. The Cool Spots are located on Milwaukee Public Schools playgrounds and staffed by MPS Department of Community Recreation. The Milwaukee Fire Department provides a special sprinkler and hose and the Milwaukee Water Works connects this to a nearby hydrant. The Cool Spots are turned on between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Friday on days when the temperature exceeds 85 degrees.

The Cool Spots will be open June 26-August 18.

Auer Avenue School
2221 W. Auer Ave.

Hopkins Street School
1503 W. Hopkins St.

Clarke Street School
2816 W. Clarke St.

Columbia School
1354 W. Columbia St.

Wheatley School
2442 N. 20th St.

Carmen Playfield
7320 W. Carmen

- Turn on a hose and sprinkler in your backyard and invite the neighbors to come over